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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION
WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING
OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL
COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

QUESTION OF SENDING VISITING MISSIONS TO TERRITORIES

Report of the Chairman

1. At its 1417th meeting, on 12 July 1993, the Special Committee adopted a resolution concerning the question of sending visiting missions to Territories. 1/ The operative paragraphs of the resolution read as follows:

"The Special Committee,

"...

"1. Stresses the need to dispatch periodic visiting missions to Non-Self-Governing Territories in order to facilitate the full, speedy and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples with respect to those Territories;

"2. Calls upon the administering Powers to cooperate or continue to cooperate with the United Nations by receiving United Nations visiting missions in the Territories under their administration;

"3. Continues to call upon those administering Powers that are not participating in the work of the Special Committee to reconsider their decisions and to take an active part in the work of the Committee;

"4. Requests its Chairman to continue consultations with the administering Powers concerned on the implementation of paragraph 2 of the present resolution and to report thereon to the Special Committee as appropriate."

2. An account of the consultations held by the Chairman in accordance with paragraph 4 of the resolution is set out below.

3. During the week of 4 April 1994, the Chairman held extensive consultations with representatives of the administering Powers on the question of sending visiting missions to Territories, in accordance with the mandate entrusted to him by the Special Committee. In drawing their attention to the above resolution as well as to the related resolutions of the General Assembly, the Chairman informed the representatives of the administering Powers that the Special Committee continued to attach the utmost importance to the dispatch of United Nations visiting missions to the Non-Self-Governing Territories as a means of securing first-hand information on those Territories. The Chairman once again appealed to the administering Powers to cooperate or continue to cooperate with the United Nations in the sending of such missions. It was the understanding of the Special Committee, from an exchange of views that took place at its regional seminars held in 1990, 1992 and 1993, 2/ that some territorial Governments had expressed their willingness to receive United Nations visiting missions. The Chairman expressed the hope that if such requests were made, the administering Powers concerned would cooperate and facilitate the dispatch of such missions to those Territories.

4. The Chairman informed the administering Powers that their full cooperation was essential for the successful implementation of the Plan of Action approved by the General Assembly for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. He took the opportunity to express his appreciation for their cooperation in facilitating the participation of a number of representatives from Non-Self-Governing Territories in the two seminars that the Special Committee had organized within the context of the International Decade. He reminded the administering Powers of the forthcoming seminar to be held at United Nations Headquarters in New York and expressed the hope that they would continue to extend the same cooperation to the Committee.

5. The Chairman noted with satisfaction that in response to an invitation by the Government of New Zealand, which had been fully supported by the people of Tokelau (A/AC.109/1162), and in accordance with a decision adopted by the Special Committee at its 1417th meeting, on 12 July 1993, the Special Committee would be dispatching a fourth United Nations visiting mission to the Territory at the end of July 1994.

6. As in previous years, a number of the administering Powers consulted reiterated their willingness to continue to provide all necessary information on the Territories under their administration in fulfilment of their obligation under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations.

7. The representative of one administering Power stated that his Government's record on decolonization had been good and that its position with regard to the dispatch of visiting missions to the Territories under its administration had not changed. Those territorial Governments willing to receive visiting missions, however, should first consult with the administering Power concerned. With regard to the concept of decolonization, the representative said that the Territories under his Government's administration had democratically elected Governments and it was up to them to decide their future status. So far, none of those Territories had taken any action with regard to their future status.

8. The representatives of two administering Powers stated that they remained open to any suggestions by local Governments in the Territories concerned regarding their readiness to receive United Nations visiting missions. The representatives made reference to their respective communications 3/ informing the United Nations that they would stop participating in the work of the Special Committee and indicated that they did not foresee a change of policy in that regard. However, they reiterated the commitment of their Governments to fulfil their obligations concerning transmission of information under Article 73 e of the Charter.

9. The representative of one administering Power stated that it was difficult for his Government to facilitate the access of a visiting mission to the Territory concerned. He expressed the hope that the Secretary-General of the United Nations would succeed in his ongoing efforts to bring the parties concerned together and make possible the dispatch of a visiting mission to the Territory in the near future.

10. The representative of New Zealand reiterated the readiness of his Government to continue, in accordance with established practice and procedure, to provide the Committee with all relevant information on Tokelau and to participate in the related work of the Special Committee. His Government looked forward to the forthcoming dispatch of a visiting mission to the Territory. The representative expressed the hope that sufficient progress would be made on the Constitution of Tokelau that it would be possible for the people of the Territory to decide on their future status by the year 2000.

11. The Chairman will keep the Special Committee apprised of any further developments in his consultations with the administering Powers concerned on this question.

12. A list of the visiting missions dispatched by the Special Committee or by the General Assembly is contained in the annex to the present report.

Notes

1/ See A/48/23 (Part II), chap. IV, para. 17. The complete report is to be issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 23 (A/48/23).

2/ Regional seminars held in Vanuatu (A/AC.109/1040 and Corr.1) and Barbados (A/AC.109/1043) in 1990; in Grenada (A/AC.109/1114) in 1992; and in Papua New Guinea (A/AC.109/1159) in 1993. The first two were held in observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; the last two were held within the context of the Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

3/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 23 (A/41/23), chap. I, paras. 76 and 77, and A/47/86.

Annex

VISITING MISSIONS DISPATCHED BY THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE OR BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1965 Cook Islands (elections supervision)

1966 Equatorial Guinea

1967 Aden

1968 Equatorial Guinea (referendum/elections supervision)

1971 Papua New Guinea (jointly with the Trusteeship Council)

1972 Niue
Papua New Guinea (elections observation - jointly with the Trusteeship Council)

1974 Niue (referendum observation)
Cocos (Keeling) Islands
Gilbert and Ellice Islands (referendum observation)

1975 Cape Verde
Montserrat
Spanish Sahara

1976 British Virgin Islands
Tokelau

1977 French Somaliland (referendum/elections observation)
Cayman Islands
United States Virgin Islands

1979 Guam
New Hebrides

1980 Turks and Caicos Islands (April)
Cocos (Keeling) Islands
Turks and Caicos Islands (October/November) (elections observation)

1981 Tokelau
American Samoa

1982 Montserrat

1984 Cocos (Keeling) Islands (act of self-determination)
Anguilla

1986 Tokelau

1989 Namibia (elections observation)